

Message Text

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USNMR SHAPE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 4509

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, NAC
SUBJECT: TRIP TO WASHINGTON IS MODERATE PLUS FOR CARAMANLIS'
IMAGE

1. ALTHOUGH REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT SKETCHY CONCERNING BOTH CARAMANLIS' ACTUAL ROLE AT THE NATO SUMMIT AND HIS BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND OTHER NATO LEADERS, THE GREEK PRIME MINISTER SO FAR SEEMS TO HAVE SCORED POINTS WITH WIDE SEGMENTS OF HIS DOMESTIC AUDIENCE. COMMUNIQUEES AND SPEECHES IN WASHINGTON HAVE RECEIVED VERY PROMINENT COVERAGE AND THE GREEKS HAVE BEEN WATCHING IN PARTICULAR THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR PRIME MINISTER. THE GENERAL PICTURE EMERGING HERE IS THAT CARAMANLIS HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN DEFENDING GREEK NATIONAL INTERESTS IN SPITE OF THE BASICALLY "HOSTILE" ENVIRONMENT PREVAILING IN WASHINGTON.

2. IN HIS BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND WITH
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ECEVIT, CARAMANLIS APPEARS TO HAVE EARNED GOOD MARKS FROM A LARGE NUMBER OF GREEKS. THE ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWING THE ECEVIT MEETING THAT THE SECRETARIES-GENERAL OF THE RESPECTIVE MFAS WOULD MEET IN ANKARA JULY 4-5 TO DISCUSS AEGEAN ISSUES HAS BEEN LARGELY PORTRAYED HERE AS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF REPORTS THAT CARAMANLIS WAS ALSO ABLE TO ELICIT A PLEDGE FROM ECEVIT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO "PROVOCATIONS" -- INCLUDING NO

RENEWED "SISMIK" EXPLORATION -- IN THE AEGEAN THIS SUMMER. IN SPITE OF CONTINUING GREEK HOSTILITY TOWARDS TURKEY, IT COMES AS A RELIEF TO A GREAT NUMBER OF GREEKS OF ALL POLITICAL PERSUASIONS THAT A POTENTIALLY "HOT SUMMER" IN GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS MAY BE AVOIDED.

3. THE CARTER-CARAMANLIS MEETING LIKEWISE HAS BEEN PRESENTED HERE IN GENERALLY FAVORABLE TERMS. DRAWING UPON THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF THE COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING THAT MEETING, SOME OF THE REPORTING HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESIDENT GAVE CARAMANLIS ASSURANCES CONCERNING THE SECURITY OF THE GREEK ISLANDS IN THE AEGEAN. MOST ACCOUNTS INDICATE THAT THERE WAS FULL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS IN EVERY RESPECT EXCEPT FOR DIFFERENCES ON THE ISSUE OF WHETHER OR NOT TO LIFT THE EMBARGO.

4. THE NATO SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE WAS ALSO SEEN IN MANY QUARTERS AS BEING A "VICTORY" OF SORTS FOR CARAMANLIS. REPORTS OBVIOUSLY BASED ON GOG SOURCES IN WASHINGTON CLAIM THAT CARAMANLIS' PERSONAL INTERVENTION FORCED THE ALLIES TO DROP FROM THE COMMUNIQUE ENDORSEMENT OF REPEALING THE EMBARGO AGAINST TURKEY. THE FINAL LANGUAGE IN THE RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS 12 AND 13 IS VIEWED AS ACCEPTABLE TO GREECE. MOREOVER, SEVERAL REPORTS ON THE SUMMIT NOTED THAT THE NATO LEADERS ARE NOW BRINGING STRONG PRESSURE ON ECEVIT TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PROPOSALS ON CYPRUS.

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